

THE BOSTON
MEDICAL AND SURGICAL JOURNAL.

Vol. III.]

TUESDAY, AUGUST 10, 1830.

[No. 26.]

I.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICE OF SOEM-
MERING.

THIS distinguished anatomist and physiologist died at Frankfort, March 6th, in the 76th year of his age; and the following notice of his earthly career is contained in the French *Journal Hebdomadaire*.

From the character of his writings, and the solid basis of his reputation, Soemmering may be looked upon as one of the fathers of science. To the Germans, indeed, he appeared in the light of a contemporary and fellow laborer; but to us, who have only known him in his works, he seems rather to have belonged to another age. We associate the idea of him with that of Albinus, with whom he possessed so much in common.

Samuel Thomas Von Soemmering was born at Thorn, the 25th of January, 1755. He received the degree of Doctor at the University of Gottingen, in April, 1788, and from that period began to establish in Germany that reputation for science which continued to increase with his works. The inaugural dissertation of Soemmering was entitled, *Dissertatio de basi Encephali et Originibus Nervorum Cranio Egredientium*. Already, in this first and important work, appeared that admirable

activity of investigation, and astonishing power of invention, which always characterized the talent of Soemmering. In 1779 he published a volume, in quarto, on the Functions of the Lymphatic System in Health and Disease, and on the application to be made of such knowledge to the purposes of practical medicine.

About this period, so fruitful in moral and political discussions, many philosophers, and among others Raynal and Condorcet, were wont to plead the cause of the negroes, whose emancipation they demanded in vehement and systematic declamations. Attention was directed to this question from every quarter, and it was on this occasion that Soemmering published his Treatise on the Physical Differences which distinguish the Negro from the European. The first edition of this work was published at Mayence, in 1784, and was followed by another, which appeared at Frankfort, in 1785. In the same year our author produced a Dissertation on the small Calculi which are found in the Pineal Gland and its immediate vicinity. Always interested about the brain, Soemmering published a work on the Decussation of the Optic Nerves, and, in 1788, one on the Brain and Spinal Marrow. In the interval between these two publications, he composed a Me-

moir on Crises and Critical Derangements. Another, in 1788, made much noise in Germany and France, perhaps chiefly owing to the nature of the subject : it was upon the pernicious Effects of Corsets. The numerous discoveries which he had made on the structure of the brain were only known to the *Savans*, but no sooner did he write about stays than all Europe became familiar with his name !

The cabinet of Cassel contained a magnificent collection of monsters. Soemmering studied with care all the curious examples which were there collected, and, in a treatise on the subject, he described the singular cases which he had remarked in this museum. Even here he contrived to be original, in a description which appeared little calculated for the display of talent. The most able part of these observations is that which relates to acephalous and polycephalous monsters. In 1791 appeared a work on the Cure of Calculus ; and in 1795 he composed, in conjunction with T. Wentzel, a very interesting Dissertation on the Bones of Gouty Persons.

It was maintained by some, that fracture of the vertebræ was always mortal: Soemmering combated this opinion ; and, in a work which appeared in 1793, he proved, by facts and reasoning thereupon, that, even in the cases where chronic disease of the vertebræ has produced their entire destruction, a chance of safety may remain.

We have not yet spoken of one of the works of Soemmering which has obtained the greatest success, and not without cause : it is his Manual of the Structure

of the Human Body. A great number of editions, published at different times, attest the merit of the work. In some places, indeed, where the art of multiplying editions has become an integral part of literary merit, this would have been no decisive proof ; but in Germany, where they do not recompose a book till the former edition has been sold, the repetition of the publication generally shows that the work is meritorious. The one in question is remarkable for the extreme fidelity of the descriptions, as well as for the number and variety of the facts which it contains. Some parts deserve higher commendation ; such are the osteology and the description of the brain and nerves. The last, indeed, was always a favorite subject with Soemmering, and among his later works upon it was one entitled, "On the Organ of the Soul." In this he maintains an opinion which has not the merit of novelty, nor the solidity of his general doctrines ; he holds, namely, that the soul has its seat in the humidity which, during life, lubricates the ventricles of the brain. In 1811 he gave an account of some interesting researches regarding the fluid in the nerves, and on its uses and connexion with the nutrition of these organs in the healthy and diseased conditions. Nor must we omit to mention, in relation to this part of the subject, his tables of the base of the brain, in which are represented with great beauty, and we believe with extreme correctness, the principal differences which exist between the encephalon in man and the lower animals.

The Society of Gottingen had

published a programme on the causes and prevention of hernia. Soemmering replied to this in a treatise on Umbilical and Inguinal Ruptures. A singular accident attracted public attention to this work : the author had advanced various propositions regarding the effects of high breeches and hot beverages, on the production of hernia. There soon appeared an anonymous criticism on the doctrines advanced by Soemmering, the indecency of which was its most remarkable peculiarity. In the last of these he advanced the opinion now generally adopted, that umbilical hernia never forms in adults through the umbilical cicatrix itself, but in the linea alba in its neighborhood. The works of Soemmering almost defy enumeration in a notice such as this, but we must add to the list his plates of the Ear, the Eye, and Organs of Voice, and those of the Human Embryo. It is this last which has led the way to the important researches in embryology which have since been carried on by the Germans, —Baer, Meckel, Tiedemann, Carus, and others. Soemmering, however, was the first who gave an exact figure of the embryo, and of the successive gradations of its development from the fourth week after its conception.

The last work of this illustrious author was on the Fatal Diseases of the Bladder in Old Persons, the first edition of which appeared in 1809, and a second in 1822, being, as we believe, the close of Soemmering's professional writings.

In 1828, Soemmering attained the fiftieth year of his doctorate. It is a general usage in Germany to celebrate a kind of jubilee in

honor of those who have grown old in scientific labors and fame. On this occasion, all the most distinguished men in Germany hastened to render homage to the aged philosopher.

II.

CASE OF COMPLETE PROLAPSUS OF AN IMPREGNATED UTERUS.

By WILLIAM COULSON, Esq.,

Consulting Surgeon to the London Lying-in Hospital, and Surgeon to the General Dispensary.

MARY ANN REDBURN, ætat. 22, of a delicate constitution and short stature, applied to me on the 23d of April, 1830, for a prolapsus of the womb. The patient stated that she had been delivered about a year ago of a male child, and that, in a month afterwards, without any assignable cause, the womb descended beyond the external lips, in which state, with very little exception, it had continued up to the present time. At the time of the first descent, in May, 1829, the uterus was of the size of an egg : it generally, though not always, returned to its natural situation at night, and descended in the morning. The menses also were regular. At Christmas, she ceased to menstruate ; all the symptoms of pregnancy occurred, and the uterus returned into its natural situation with much less frequency than before. In fact, for five weeks prior to the patient's coming to me, the uterus had remained, both night and day, completely prolapsed ; which circumstance induced her to apply for relief. On examination, I found the whole uterus, which was as large as a cocoa-nut, and not unlike it in

shape, protruding beyond the external lips; the base of the tumor being surrounded by the lesser lips, and the vagina doubled on itself. The part was very red and hot, but not tender to the touch; the os uteri, to the extent of an inch around, was ulcerated, and the uterus itself felt as if there was a foetus in it. The patient experienced a dragging sensation from the loins, and felt occasional pains across the lower part of the abdomen.

Treatment.—I recommended that she should keep constantly on her back, apply emollient applications, as fomentations or light poultices, and the tormentilla wash, to the ulceration. In addition, to support the part with a well-adapted bandage; but no attempt at reduction was made. Internally, castor oil was exhibited. At the end of a month, by this plan of treatment, the uterus had returned in a great degree, the os uteri being only visible beyond the external lips.

On Monday, May 24th, the membranes burst, and a good deal of water came away: in the evening, no part of the womb protruded; lingering pains supervened, and continued till five o'clock, A.M., of the following Thursday, when true labor pains came on; and a quarter before six she was delivered, without any medical assistance, of a male child. I am informed that it was a foot presentation, and that the child exhibited signs of life for three-quarters of an hour after birth.

At half past one of the same day (Thursday), I visited the patient with Mr. Jackson, of Church Street, Spitalfields, who had seen her the night before. The placenta not having come away, Mr.

J., on examination, found it lying in the vagina, and removed it. The uterus was in its natural situation.

Remarks.—There are numerous instances on record of complete prolapsus of the womb, both in the impregnated and the unimpregnated state; but cases like the preceding, in which impregnation occurred at the time when a complete prolapsus existed, are more rare, and show that the most striking displacement of the organ neither prevents conception and the development of the foetus, nor materially interferes with the health of the mother. The case also illustrates that, by the treatment pursued, the size of the tumor diminished as the time of labor approached. The following case, taken from vol. xliii., p. 367, of the *Journal de Medecine*, bears on the first of these points.

“Elizabeth Gautier, after being married nine years, became pregnant for the first time. From the age of fifteen she had been subject to a complete descent of the womb, with inversion of the vagina: this occurred when she was menstruating, and was attributed to catching cold during that period. At bed-time she returned the womb into its natural situation, and in the morning it always came down. During her pregnancy, the whole of the womb protruded beyond the outer lips, the patient experiencing no other inconvenience than a difficulty, towards the end of her time, in making water, of which she always relieved herself by raising the tumor.” An unjustifiable operation was resorted to in this case, at the time of labor, viz.,

dividing the neck of the uterus: the child, which had arrived at its full time, was dead born; the mother recovered.

Wonderful as it may appear, that impregnation and the development of the fœtus should take place in a person with a prolapsed uterus, it is almost equally surprising that in this state the fœtus should be expelled without difficulty. This struck the attention of Harvey,* who mentions the following case of a poor woman, who long labored under the bearing down or precipitation of her womb, to show that the uterus has its share in the business of delivery. After trying various means, he says, "and now at this time it [the tumor] was as large as a *bull's cod*, dangling between her legs: so that I suspected, that not only the *sheath*, but that the *wombe* it selfe was now inverted, or else that shee was diseased with a *uterine hernia* or *rupture*. It grew at last bigger than a *man's head*, being then a hard tumor, and hanging down to her *knees* did much pain her, so that she could not goe (but upon all foure), and breaking just in the bottom of it, it did effund a moisture (as if it had been an *ulcer*) and blood with it. Looking upon it (for I did not explore it by touch) I did suspect it to be a *cancer* of the *wombe*, and therefore did bethink my selfe of a *ligature*, and cutting it off: and in the interim, I advised her to apply gentle *fomentations* to it, to assuage the paine. But the following night, an *infant* perfectly shaped, of a span long, was cast

out of that *tumor*, but it was dead."

Another striking point connected with this subject is, that the uterus should sometimes be completely prolapsed at the period of its greatest expansion, even during labor. Sabatier,* in an excellent paper on the Displacements of the Uterus and Vagina, says, that when we recal to mind the situation of the womb, the strength of the ligaments, whose office it is to keep the organ in its place, and the connexion of the vagina with the surrounding parts, it is difficult to conceive that it should be subject to so extensive a displacement as that of which we have just been speaking. But it is still more difficult to conceive how this displacement should occur during pregnancy, and even during labor. Nevertheless, there are several cases of the kind recorded, and he mentions two. The complete prolapsus of the womb could scarcely, one would imagine, be mistaken for any other affection; but it has happened, says Sabatier, that women with precipitation of the womb have passed for hermaphrodites, because the tumor, which escaped from the natural part, had been mistaken for a penis. The shape of the tumor will of course vary in the impregnated and unimpregnated state, but a careful inspection of the part will be sufficient to discover the nature of the complaint.

* Exercitationes de Generatione Animalium. London, 1651. The translation published in 1653, 8vo. vide page 495.

* Sur les Deplacements de la Matrice et du Vagin. in the 3d Vol., p. 368, of the *Memoires de l'Academie de Chirurgie*, 4to. Also published, with little alteration, in the *Medecine Operatoire*, by the same author, Vol. III., p. 654. Edition of 1824. Vid. also some able articles on this subject in Mr. Samuel Cooper's Dictionary, and in the *Dictionnaire des Sciences Medicales*, t. xxiii.

In my case and that of Gautier before related, the symptoms were slight, and the health of the patient but little affected. In both cases, also, prior to impregnation, the menses were regular,—showing that the displacement of the organ did not interfere with its commonest function. A dragging sensation in the loins, occasional desire to make water, tenesmus, inflammation and ulceration of the most prominent part of the tumor, are the usual symptoms of the complaint.

The treatment to be adopted in this affection is extremely simple. If the unimpregnated uterus be prolapsed, and the prolapsus has but recently occurred, the part may, in general, be reduced without difficulty or danger;—if, on the other hand, the descent of the womb has been of longer duration, and there be much swelling and tumefaction of the part, it is obvious that by the recumbent posture, leeches, emollient applications, support to the part, and proper medical treatment, the inflammation must be removed before the reduction be attempted. The coexistence of pregnancy in this state renders the case more difficult: if the prolapsus occurs in the early state of impregnation, bearing in mind the observations which have just been made, we may endeavor to replace it; but if it occur in a more advanced period, or, as in my case, the surgeon has not the opportunity of seeing it till then, any attempt at reduction would be highly improper. I should advise, under such circumstances, the same plan as was adopted in Redburn's case. The treatment to be pursued in a complete prolapsus of the womb

at the time of labor, is a subject which I will leave to accoucheurs to determine. I will merely observe, in conclusion, that when the prolapsus has been reduced, and the state of the parts will admit of the use of the instrument, the patient should on no account neglect to wear a pessary, to prevent a recurrence of the mischief.*

III.

HEMATEMESIS—EXCISION OF A RIB.

THE following cases are reported as having been treated at the French Hospital La Charité.

Hæmatemesis produced by the Rupture of a Branch of the Coronary Artery of the Stomach.—Death.

Louis Petit, æt. 29, admitted April 30. By trade a carpenter, of sanguine temperament, addicted from childhood to intemperance and excessive use of spirituous liquors. Was seized five years ago by vomitings of blood, which continued for eight days, returning during that time every night at the same hour. The remedies he took, including astringent drinks, stopped it at this time, but the patient was so much exhausted with the loss of blood that he was confined to his bed for two months.

On his recovery, notwithstanding the warnings of his medical attendants, he drank as much brandy as ever, without, however, materially affecting his health.

April 13, 1830.—He began to feel heat and pain in the epigastric region; he almost entirely lost his appetite; and in the evening of the 30th, on returning from

* From the London Medical Gazette.

his work, a general feeling of illness obliged him to take to his bed, and immediately afterwards he vomited a quantity of blood, estimated at five or six pounds: he was immediately taken to the hospital. No blood was abstracted from the veins, his pulse being small and easily compressed, and he appeared quite exhausted. Mustard poultices were applied to the feet.

May 1st.—During the night the patient vomited, but not abundantly; the pulse has arisen, and he is recovering strength. Hirudines xx. to the epigastric region, low diet, and an emulsion of gum and syrup of quinces.

8th.—Yesterday evening the patient had a return of the hæmatemesis, and vomited a considerable quantity of blood. His general state is not altered; bowels confined. Twenty leeches to the anus. Continue emulsion.

At five o'clock in the afternoon, a return of the hemorrhage, more violent than the preceding, brought on great prostration of strength, and at ten he died.

Postmortem.—The excessive paleness of the stomach and small intestines contrasted strongly with the redness of the large. The stomach contained a sanguineous fluid, in which a few clots of blood were floating. About three inches from the cardiac orifice, an ulceration was found, of nearly three lines in depth and six or seven in diameter; its edges were thickened, and had a scirrhus feel, formed by the condensed cellular tissue and muscular membrane; in the centre was a conical prominence, at the top of which was a clot of blood, half an inch in length when drawn out.

A probe carried into the cavity of the coronary artery, on the external surface of the stomach, was carried into the centre of the prominence, and pushed out the fibrinous plug which closed the opening. The probe, while carried along the under surface of the ulcer, entered a second canal diametrically opposite to the first; it was, in fact, the same artery nearly divided by the ulcerative process, but still connected by a filament of the arterial coat. The rest of the mucous membrane of the stomach was unaltered either in texture or color.

It is remarkable, in this case, that the whole ill effects of his indulgence in spirituous liquors should be confined to a single spot of the mucous membrane of the stomach, while his general health did not appear in any degree injured. It is also extremely difficult to account for the manner in which the hemorrhage stopped after eight days, since it appears that a rupture of the artery then, as now, must have been the cause of it. Ordinarily, however, in these cases, a return of hemorrhages takes place at short intervals; whereas here, for five years, he was entirely free from all symptoms of it. Could the astringents have in any way effected the plugging of the torn artery by a clot of fibrinous coagulation? It is rather a peculiar case, and seems well worth recording.

Case of a Rib affected with Caries being dissected out.—Death of the Patient.

Louis Evrard, æt. 38, admitted March 23, 1830, with a small fistulous ulcer above the fifth rib of the right side, from which had

been discharged, for some time, purulent matter in abundance.

A probe, passed under the skin in the sinus, seemed directed to the fifth rib, near its centre, and which appeared rough and denuded, but it seemed difficult to determine whether the disease was necrosis, or caries of the bone, the history of the patient giving but little assistance.

The patient was thin, emaciated, suffering from severe cough attended with thick mucous but not purulent expectoration: on the contrary, the matter discharged from the fistula was decidedly purulent; consequently they were very distinct from each other, and hence all idea of connexion between the surface of the bronchiæ and the lining of the ribs was dismissed.

On the 24th of April, M. Roux proceeded to dissect the rib out, after having taken every means to convince himself that the disease had only attacked that bone in the centre, and that those of the other side were free. The operation was performed in the following manner:—

The whole of the soft parts, covering as much of the bone as was affected, was surrounded by two semi-elliptic incisions, passing immediately under the right nipple, and extending to the sternum. The chain-saw was then passed, by means of Deschamp's seton needle, to the two extremities of the diseased bone, and about four inches were taken out. The part, however, next the sternum not appearing sound, a still further portion was taken off with a circular saw. The pleura costalis was naturally adherent to the inferior border of the rib, but at the superior it had

been separated and pushed in by an accumulation of putrid pus. M. Roux convinced himself that this did not communicate with the interior of the chest, and he could discover no further mark of disease. It was then dressed simply, and during the next two or three days the wound looked well, and the patient's cough was less painful, though quite as frequent.

On examining the bone, it was found to be in a state of true caries; the superior and internal surface especially were rough, and entirely denuded, and becoming gradually less diseased as it approached the extremities.

After the second day, oppressions and pains in the side became more serious, and the patient rapidly sunk with symptoms of pleurisy of the right side.

Postmortem.—The right cavity of the chest contained a considerable quantity of sero-purulent fluid, and some albuminous flakes, all apparently of recent formation: the two inferior thirds of this cavity were filled with the fluid, but above, it required some force to separate the lungs, on account of old adhesions; and the tearing that resulted, showed the lung all studded with tubercles in an advanced stage, and the internal surface of the fourth, second and third ribs, disorganized by caries,—and the points where this disease was most advanced, were those which corresponded with the tuberculous masses. The caries extended to the posterior part of the ribs, which broke with great ease; it was worthy of remark, however, that the portion of pleura from whence the rib was taken appeared perfectly

healthy, and had formed no adhesion with the membrane lining the lung. The tubercles had not suppurated in any part. There was nothing remarkable in the other organs.

IV.

EARLY DAYS OF THE GOUT.

FRIEND, the very learned author of a treatise on the history of Physic before his day, gives us the following account of the treatment of the Gout as recommended by ÆTIUS, who wrote about the year 400.

I shall take leave of this author (ÆTIUS) with giving you a sample of a remedy for the *Gout*, both because it is somewhat extraordinary, and the first in its kind, I believe, in the history of Physic. It is an external medicine: he calls it the *Grand Dryer*. The patient is to use it for a whole year, and observe this diet besides in each month. He calls months by the Alexandrian or Egyptian names, but in English the direction runs thus:—"In September, to eat and drink milk; in October, to eat garlic; in November, to abstain from bathing; in December, not to eat cabbage; in January, to take a glass of pure wine in the morning; in February, to eat no beet; in March, to mix sweet things both in eatables and drinkables; in April, not to eat horse-radish, nor in May the fish called polypus; in June, to drink cold water in a morning; in July, to avoid venery; and lastly, in August, to eat no mallows." This may give us some idea of the quackery of those times; and yet there is a more extravagant antidote than

this in Alexander for the same distemper, which must be used too for a twelvemonth, with the following regulation:—"To be given in January, February, March, and April, five days in each month alternately; in May three, and in June two, alternately; in July, August, and September, each one day; in October and November, each two days, and in December, four alternately." So that there are thirty-six doses in the year. At the same time the patient must abstain from wine, swine's flesh, beef, hare, cabbage, mustard, milk, &c. He has another too consisting of three hundred and sixty-five potions; and this must be taken so as to furnish out a course for two years: and I dare say, whoever will have patience to go through such a regimen, for so long a time together, and entirely conform himself to these strict rules, will complain less of the gout than we find they do in our modern times.

In connection with this subject, we offer the following letter which has accidentally fallen into our hands, as it describes the original use and reputation of a remedy now in general use.

A LETTER UPON THE GOUT.

Written by M. EMERIGON, King's Attorney in the Royal Jurisdiction, and at the General Court of Admiralty of the Town of St. Pierre.

St. Pierre, Martinique, Feb. 8, 1776.
To Mons. the Count de NOZIEROS.

SIR,—I will now give you the relation which you request of me, respecting my Gout and supposed cure.

This malady is not hereditary

with me. I felt the first stroke of it in 1767, aged then about 55 years.

Frequent pains which circulated in my feet, knees and hands, were omens of it. I did not, however, think myself a subject for the gout; but a strong fit which came upon me in 1769, convinced me that I was really arthritic. That fit was followed by many others; often many in a year, and always longer and more violent. Both feet, the knees, and hands, were attacked; sometimes separately, and sometimes together. My last fit, in September, 1774, was extremely cruel; the attack was general, and I suffered, during more than two months, inexpressible pains:—fomentations and cataplasms of all kinds were, during the crisis, used in vain;—they gave me no relief.

I was desirous of knowing the cause of this disease; sad consolation! our ancient and modern doctors informed me that the gout was an invincible malady; that its nature was unknown; that it was the sovereign mistress of pains, and could not be subdued by violence; that it became more formidable in proportion to the number of attempts made to conquer it; and that all means used to mitigate or overcome it produced but momentary ease, and tended to irritate and prolong it: in short, that the best remedy during the pain was the pain itself. I was assured, nevertheless, that an old gouty man, who had lost the use of all his limbs for more than five years, had been radically cured by a medicine for which he was indebted to a Caribbee. I verified the fact, and, certain of that cure, immediately made

use of the same remedy, of which I soon proved the salutary effects.

The composition is as follows, viz:—Into a bottle containing about three pints of taffia, infuse two ounces of gum guaiacum pulverized. Stop the bottle well, and expose it to the sun for seven or eight days. Stir and shake it from time to time, facilitate the dissolution of the gum, and observe not to fill the bottle entirely, lest the effervescence should burst it; filtrate the liquor through cotton, or blotting paper. The common strong black bottles are proper to receive and preserve this medicine, and if they be well corked, it will improve very much by age. A large spoonful is a dose, which must be taken every morning, fasting. The taste of it is not agreeable, but one inures himself to it by habit. Taffia must necessarily be used; brandy would not produce the same effect.—I commenced the use of this remedy in November, 1774. My legs, which were wont to remain a long time weak and feeble after the fits, recovered soon their force and vigor. The nodes which had formed themselves upon almost all the joints of my feet and hands, were dissipated by little and little, either by the effect of the medicine, or by the application of white soap. The play of the articulations is perfectly re-established. There exist but two light nodosities, which do not affect me, and which diminish daily. I feel no longer those shooting pains which formerly tormented me, and announced a new attack; and, for about fifteen months, have enjoyed the comforts of life, of which I was deprived during seven or eight years successively. The daily use that I

make of this remedy procures me another advantage :—Viscosities, rising in the stomach, bitterness, an abundance of humors, and an excessive phlegm, obliged me to have recourse, from time to time, to the letting of blood and purging. These inconveniences are dissipated, and my stomach performs its functions with ease, and without effort. I have reason to believe that this liquor has the virtue of breaking and dividing the gouty humor, hindering it from accumulating and fixing itself, and of operating the evacuation of it, either by expectoration, which is abundant after having taken the dose, or in producing the effect of a light purge. I am not, nevertheless, entirely satisfied.

Many arthritic people have often extolled, with too much haste, medicines which had procured them but a mere respite. However, if the present year runs off without my feeling anything of the gout, I shall think myself radically cured. As to regimen, I avoid great repasts, and all sorts of excess. One or two hours after having taken my dose, I breakfast on milk. I dine frugally, without, however, any choice of aliment,—fat or lean, sweet, salted or spiced, cold or hot, my stomach accommodates itself to it, provided it be not overcharged. I eat no supper, or very little. Water and old Bourdeaux wine form my only beverage.

Yours, &c. EMERIGON.

BOSTON, TUESDAY, AUGUST 10, 1830.

HYDROPHOBIA.

It appears evident, from the best sources of information, that *Rabies Canina* is now epidemic in England. The papers contain, it seems, exaggerated statements of the extent to which this disease prevails among the canine race ; but a distinguished physician in London, who has been engaged in examining into the subject, states, that at one of the veterinary establishments in that city, not less than sixty dogs have been received within the last three months.

The alarming and unprecedented extent of this disease, is most probably in no degree owing to the state of the weather. Although it is a common opinion that it is produced by great heat, and peculiar to the

summer season, those who have best reason to be relied on have given ample evidence that such opinion is erroneous. During the coldest part of the last winter, we have a late account of two dogs and a cat laboring under this disease ; and many like cases might doubtless be collected, were not the question already set at rest by ample observations of Dr. Hertwig.—See this Journal, vol. 2, p. 802.

We have still to deplore the want of an efficient remedy for hydrophobia. The only security against it is the instantaneous excision or cauterization of the part bitten.

A bill is before the Parliament of Great Britain, the object of which is to prevent *by law* the spread of the disease. It authorises any per-

son to seize a mad dog with as little ceremony as he would arrest a threatening maniac, and to give it over to the charge of a constable: the bill also gives power to magistrates, in certain parishes, to order the confinement of these animals, and thus greatly abridges the liberty they have so long enjoyed in a country which has hitherto been justly regarded as the paradise of dogs.

CHLORIDE OF LIME.

No one who has not used this article can duly appreciate its value for domestic use, particularly in the summer season. Every housekeeper should keep a bottle of it in his privy, and, every second or third morning, pour two or three table-spoonsful of the powder into the vault. A pint bottleful will cost him but 25 cents, and the plan above proposed will completely destroy every vestige of disagreeable odor. Were every family in Boston to pursue this course, a vast quantity of foul air would be destroyed, and the atmosphere of the city very materially purified. We hope the Editors of public newspapers will remind the people to attend to this matter without delay;—a single experiment is enough to ensure a continuance of the practice.

CONNECTION BETWEEN THE STATE OF THE UTERUS, AND ABDOMINAL NEURALGIA.

DR. ADDISON, in a work recently published, expresses an opinion that there exists a close connection between the state of the uterus, and local neuralgic pains. He cites some

cases in illustration of this opinion. Believing that the violent pain sometimes succeeding to suppressed catamenia to be of this description, he has treated such cases successfully with Conium. Dr. A. also thinks it probable that the violent pain sometimes following suppressed lochia after delivery, is often neuralgic, and that some of those cases which have been published as anomalous forms of puerperal fever, might likewise have partaken of the same character, and been cured by like treatment.

LONDON UNIVERSITY.

MR. C. BELL has resigned his professorship in the London University. The reason given by him for this unexpected step we understand to be, the impossibility of realizing those brilliant prospects which he held out to the medical pupils, in his first lecture, at the opening of the University. The circumstances in which this disappointment originated are not stated in terms, but from the tenor of some communications to the medical journals, they are not extremely creditable to the Governors of the Institution.

PROFESSIONAL DUTY.

PHYSICIANS do too little for the morals of their patients. We neglect too much the cultivation of moral excellence and the religious principle in ourselves. As a class, our opportunities for producing religious impressions are scarcely surpassed by those of the clergy. From our close and confidential intercourse with our fellow beings, we have unceasing opportunities to enforce the

imperative nature of moral duties, whilst our professional knowledge enables us to do it just at such moments, in such manner, and to such degree, as will impress the mind most strongly, without retarding the recovery of our patients. The exclusive trust of this duty to the clergy has been followed by bad consequences. Ignorant of the nature and circumstances of the disease, physical injury often results from an ill-timed conversation on the prospects of a future world. We could wish the precincts of the profession extended somewhat beyond physical disease,—that it were considered an integral part of our professional obligations, to administer to the spiritual wants of those who are placed under our care, and that this fact were uniformly enforced with peculiar emphasis by those Professors who point out to the medical student the path he is expected to pursue.

SWAIM'S PANACEA.

AN article in the last London Gazette of Health, affords us a piece of information not generally diffused in this country, and of great importance to the proprietors of newspapers. It is as follows:—

"*Swaim's Panacea*.—This nostrum, which has been long a very fashionable and popular remedy in Paris, as 'a purifier of the blood and juices,' has lately been introduced in America as a specific for nearly all the diseases, particularly those of the skin, to which poor human nature is heir. The proprietor represents it to contain, in a concentrated state, all the peculiar medicinal properties of sarsaparilla root; but the Medical Society of Philadelphia,

having reason to suspect that it contained something more active than sarsaparilla, recommended it to the attention of the committee appointed to examine quack medicines, who found it to be common syrup, with a small proportion of the corrosive sublimate of mercury. Instead of countenancing quackery by a medicine act, how much more creditable would it be to our legislature to follow the example of the American government, by placing it under legal regulation, and not to allow a person to advertise a remedy the composition of which is not known."

PRECAUTIONS IN THE OPERATION FOR CATARACT.

A CONSIDERABLE number of cases of cataract have been operated upon during the present season by M. Dupuytren, at the Hôtel Dieu. Depression is the method almost exclusively adopted by him; and in performing this he has the patient placed in bed, and laid on the back, the head being conveniently supported, and fixed. By these means he thinks that accidents from the movements of the patient are best guarded against, as well as those which may occur in transporting him from the operating chair back to his bed. One of the inconveniences which M. Dupuytren has most frequently met with in operating for cataract, with the patient sitting up in a chair, is syncope,—a circumstance which proves extremely embarrassing to the surgeon. Last spring, M. Dupuytren was called by M. Husson to a patient who had been operated on for cataract a long time before, and who felt some inconvenience in one of his eyes. The operation had consisted in extraction, and had only been performed on one eye. The patient had been placed in a chair, and scarcely had the surgeon finished the section of the transparent cornea, when he fainted so profoundly that the operation could not be completed; the lens remained in its

place; the wound healed; and some months after, the other eye was operated upon by the same surgeon. The method of extraction was adopted on this occasion also; the patient was again placed on a chair, and syncope came on as before, giving rise to very great difficulty and embarrassment. M. Dupuytren was called to him on account of very violent pain which he experienced in the eye which had been incompletely operated on.

Tendency to vomit, and actual vomiting, are, as is well known, very frequent after operations for cataract, particularly in children. One of the best methods of removing this, consists in making them drink a few cups of Seltzer water.—*Jour. Hebdomadaire*.

Dr. Graffe, in a late excellent publication on cataract, asserts that extraction of cataract, by the section of the upper portion of the cornea, has great advantages over that of the lower portion. "The subsequent inflammation," he says, "is in general less intense, and the sight is more perfectly preserved, because the inferior portion of the cornea retains its transparency and natural convexity." Of eighteen persons on whom the Doctor performed this operation, seventeen recovered their sight. The failure in the other case, the Doctor attributes to rheumatic inflammation.

Rheumatic Inflammation of the Eye.—A case of this variety of chronic inflammation, of eighteen months standing, was lately successfully treated with friction of an ointment of calomel and opium on the eyelids and surrounding skin, the internal use of extract of belladonna, and a seton in the neck. The patient was perfectly cured in the course of six weeks. M. Jahn, of Meinengen, says that he has employed the following lotion for a considerable time, in cases of rheumatic, gouty, and

scrofulous inflammation of the eye, and also the purulent inflammation of the eyes of infants, with complete success:—

Take of Chloride of Gold, gr. ij.
Distilled Water, ʒvi. M.

A few drops are to be instilled on the eyeball once or twice a-day, and compresses of lint, wetted with it, kept constantly over the closed eyelids.

Phrenology in Ireland.—Dr. Spurzheim has recently concluded the first course of lectures ever given in Ireland on his favorite Science. It was attended by more than three hundred persons of the most respectable class. His discourses were received with much applause, and followed by solicitations to deliver a second series. We learn by the English journals that he is now engaged at the Park Street School, in Dublin, delivering a more strictly professional course to a medical class of about ninety gentlemen, who hear him on the anatomy, physiology, &c., of the brain. Judging from the high satisfaction which we find expressed by those who have attended and are attending Dr. Spurzheim in Dublin, we should conclude that he will leave behind him some zealous proselytes in that capital.

Waterville College.—This flourishing institution, situated on the banks of that beautiful river the Kennebec, and in the midst of a most fertile and rapidly populating country, has assumed its prerogative of teaching, among other things, the abstruse art of healing human maladies. At the late Commencement, eight young gentlemen received the degree of *Bachelor of Arts*, and fourteen that of *Doctor in Medicine*. JOSEPH H. GALLUP, M.D., was elected Professor of the Institutes of Medicine, and WILLIAM PARKER, M.D., Professor of Anatomy. We heartily wish success to this infant

seminary, which possesses such advantages as must ensure it, we apprehend, a very respectable support for the present, and extensive usefulness in years to come.

Chabert No. 2.—A man named Hart advertises his approaching arrival in this city, to astonish us by the impunity with which he will "handle red hot iron, dine on live coals, swallow liquid fire," &c. &c. —Doubted.

Prize Dissertations.—At the annual meeting of the Boylston Committee on Prize Questions, held on Wednesday, the 4th day of August, 1830, a premium of Fifty Dollars, or a Gold Medal of that value, was awarded to Charles Caldwell, M.D., Professor of the Institutes of Medicine, &c., in the Transylvania University, Lexington, Ky., for a dissertation on the question, "Whether Fever is produced by the decomposition of animal or vegetable substances; and if by both, their comparative influence?"

Another premium of the same value, was also awarded to Usher Parsons, M.D., Professor of Anatomy, &c., in Brown University, Providence, R. I., for a Dissertation "On the connexion between cutaneous diseases which are not contagious, and the internal organs."

We understand one of the other Dissertations offered on the first question, was fraught with information of rare value, and displayed marks of a mind of very superior cast,—and but for the elaborate and

extraordinary production of Dr. Caldwell, would have received the unanimous approbation of the Committee. The motto of the essay to which we refer is, "Vestrae petitioni diligente respondeo." A dissertation of so high a character, and the name of its author, ought both to be before the profession and the public.

Our acknowledgments are due to Dr. C. Otto, a very distinguished physician of Copenhagen, for the *Danish Medical Journal* for 1829, and the *Danish Phrenological Journal*, of both which he is editor; also, to the same gentleman, for the new volume of *Acta Regiæ Societatis Medicæ Havnensis*.—We apprehend Dr. O. must have an uncommon development of the organ of Acquisitiveness, since his ideas of the abstract value of possession are somewhat peculiar. Respecting his Journal he writes, "I know well you will not be able to understand it, but nevertheless I hope it will be of interest to you to possess it." We can assure our correspondent, however, that we are greatly obliged to him for his attention, and that we shall not be content till we have made ourselves, and, so far as may be useful, our readers also, acquainted with the information contained in the abovementioned works.

The Communication of Senex shall have place next week. We regret that it will not be in our power to accompany it by the engraving.

WEEKLY REPORT OF DEATHS IN BOSTON, ENDING JULY 30.

| Date. | Sex. | Age. | Disease. | Date. | Sex. | Age. | Disease. |
|----------|------|--------|-------------------------|---------------------------------|------|---------|-----------------|
| July 24. | F. | 19 yrs | cholera | | F. | 7 yrs | consumption |
| | F. | 101 | old age | | M. | 4 | dropsy on brain |
| | F. | 64 | apoplexy | | M. | 31 | hydrothorax |
| | F. | 20 | typhous fever | 26. | M. | 62 | apoplexy |
| | F. | 3 | abscess on head | 28. | M. | 41 | consumption |
| 25. | M. | 6 mo | infantile | 29. | F. | 18 mo | dysentery |
| | M. | 13 yrs | drowned | 30. | M. | 6 1/2 y | dropsy on brain |
| | M. | 6 mo | smallpox (Rainsford I.) | Males, 8—Females, 7. Total, 15. | | | |

ADVERTISEMENTS.

BERKSHIRE MEDICAL INSTITUTION.

THE Annual Course of Lectures commences on the first Thursday of September, and continues fourteen weeks. Medical degrees are conferred at the close of the Lectures in December, and at the annual Commencement of Williams College, with which this Institution is connected. The examination for Medical Degrees begins on the Wednesday preceding the close of the Lecture Term. Dissertations must be lodged with the Dean of the Faculty at least four weeks before the Commencement. The Trustees have made ample provision for the accommodation of Students, and are completing the advantages for a thorough and complete medical education. The Lectures will be delivered by

H. H. CHILDS, M.D. Theory and Practice of Medicine.

S. W. WILLIAMS, M.D. Medical Jurisprudence.

S. P. WHITE, M.D. Theoretical and Operative Surgery.

C. B. COVENTRY, M.D. Materia Medica and Obstetrics.

W. PARKER, M.D. Anatomy and Physiology.

C. DEWEY, M.D. Chemistry, Botany, and Natural Philosophy.

Matriculation Ticket, \$3. Lecture Fee, \$40. Graduation, \$12. Library, \$1. Board, including washing, lodging, and room, \$1.75 a week.

By order of the Trustees,
S. M. McKAY, Sec.

Pittsfield, Mass. July 26, 1830.

Aug. 10—5t.

PRIVATE MED. SCHOOL.

THE subscribers have associated for the purpose of giving a complete course of private Medical Instruction, and the following arrangements are now in operation:—

The pupils are admitted to the practice of the Mass. General Hospital, and receive Clinical Lectures on the cases from Drs. Jackson, Channing and Ware.

Private Lectures, with examinations, are given in the intervals of the public lectures of the University.

On Midwifery and the Diseases of Women and Children, and on Chemistry, by Dr. CHANNING.

On Physiology, Pathology and Therapeutics, by Dr. WARE.

On the Principles and Practice of Surgery, by Dr. OTIS.

On Anatomy, Human and Comparative, by Dr. LEWIS.

Private Instruction will be given in Practical Anatomy, by means of demonstrations and dissections.

Such students as may be disposed, will have opportunity of acquiring a knowledge of Practical Pharmacy.

Rooms for all the purposes contemplated, have been provided in a convenient and central situation.

Application to be made to Dr. WALTER CHANNING.

JAMES JACKSON,
WALTER CHANNING,
JOHN WARE,
GEORGE W. OTIS, Jr.,
WINSLOW LEWIS, Jr.

July 6.

12t.

NEW WORK.

THIS day received, by CARTER & HENDEE, Memoir on the Treatment of Venereal Diseases without Mercury, employed at the Military Hospital of the Val De Grace. Translated from the French of H. M. J. DESRUVELLS, M.D. &c. &c.

To which is added, Observations of the Venereal Disease without Mercury. By G. J. GUTHRIE, Esq., Deputy Inspector of Hospitals, Lecturer on Surgery, &c. and various documents showing the results of this mode of Treatment in Great Britain, France, Germany and America.

Aug. 3.

NEW MEDICAL WORKS.

JUST published, and for sale, by CARTER & HENDEE,—

A Treatise upon the Semeiology of the Eye, for the Use of Physicians; and of the Countenance, for Criminal Jurisprudence. By J. F. DANIEL LOBSTEIN, M.D.

A Treatise on Surgical and General Anatomy. By WILLIAM E. HORNER, M.D. In 2 vols. 2d edition, revised and corrected.

Published weekly, by JOHN COTTON, at 184, Washington St. corner of Franklin St., to whom all communications must be addressed, *postpaid*.—Price three dollars per annum, if paid in advance, three dollars and a half if not paid within three months, and four dollars if not paid within the year. The postage for this is the same as for other newspapers.